

After Mr. Smith's motion had been seconded by Mr. T. "W. Russell, and endorsed by Sir Robert Fowler and Mr. De Lisle, another member, Mr. (afterwards Sir F. S.) Powell, leaving French novels on one side, called attention to certain circulars "headed with Scriptural texts and looking like religious tracts" which were circulated in English homes, apropos of the spread of contagious disease in India, and which, in his opinion, were calculated to do much harm.

Then came the Government spokesman, Mr. Henry Matthews, one of the most unpopular Home Secretaries that Great Britain has known since the time of the Walpole under whose effete administration the public tore down the railings of Hyde Park. Mr. Matthews, a lawyei and a Roman Catholic, was subsequently given a peerage; but in 1888 he sat in the House of Commons for the city of Birmingham. He agreed very largely with what Mr. Smith had said, and he asserted that "in comparing French modern literature with classical literature it had to be borne in mind that, while the latter was written with no evil purpose (!), the former was written with the object of directing attention to the foulest passions of which human nature was capable, and to depict them in the most attractive forms " — an allega-

tion which, applied to Zola's works, can only be described as astounding. But the Home Secretary also denounced the " penny dreadfuls," the quack advertisements, and the full reports of divorce cases which appeared in the daily press. And on the question of instituting prosecutions he said:

" The reason why the law was not more frequently put in force was the difficulty that was experienced in getting juries to draw a hard and fast line, and to convict in all cases that crossed that